

Bolton Hall
10110 Commerce Avenue
(Tujunga) (Los Angeles)
Los Angeles County, California

HABS No. CAL-340

HABS
CAL
19-TUJUN

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Western Office, Division of Design and Construction
1000 Geary Street
San Francisco, California

HABS
CAL.
19-TUJUN
1.

PHOTOGRAPH-DATA BOOK REPORT
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

CAL-340

BOLTON HALL

Tujunga (Los Angeles), Los Angeles County, California

ADDRESS: 10110 Commerce Avenue
OWNER: City of Los Angeles
OCCUPANT: Vacant
USE: None

ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Bolton Hall, built in 1913, first used as a club house by "Little Landers", owners of small plots of land bought for \$5 down after the land was subdivided, and later served as Tujunga City Hall, with an addition added for a jail, is a one-story structure built of boulders from the "stone pastures" of Tujunga, with a square tower over one end of a wide porch.

It was declared an Historic Monument by the Cultural Heritage Board of the City of Los Angeles, August 6, 1962, on the Board's first recorded day of business and submitted by the Historic Buildings Committee of the Southern California Chapter, The AIA.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Bolton Hall was built in 1913 on land owned by the California Extension Association as a club house for an organization called "Little Landers" whose people bought plots of land when Tujunga was subdivided, paying \$5 down and \$2.50 a month, plus taxes.

CAL-340
Page 2

The designer and builder was George Harris, born on a farm near Caldwell, Ohio, in 1867 and came to California in 1906. His sensitivity to stone and his theories concerning the use of this material was applied to this building. Very little mortar was used resulting in the walls having a look of piled up rock.

Bolton Hall, built without plans, was the work of what Harris calls a "trinity union"; Marshall V. Hartranst, William F. Smythe of the "Little Landers" and George Harris. Harris was Subdivider, Director of "Little Landers" and designer-builder. The hall was named after George Bolton, "Author, Reformer, Philosopher".

In approximately 1922, the building was sold to the American Legion and for a time was known as the American Legion Hall; and in 1927 or 1928 the property was sold to the City of Tujunga and served as the City Hall.

In 1932, the City of Tujunga voted itself into the City of Los Angeles and with financial obligations, later paid off by the Tujunga citizens, the building and lot became city property. At this time it was placed under the jurisdiction of the City Recreation and Park Department.

Various threats to demolish the structure have come from the City Recreation and Park Department (which has plans to develop the site for a neighborhood park and find the building inconveniently located). Beginning about 1959, the Historic Buildings Committee of the Southern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects instigated a campaign to preserve the landmark. Various local groups have joined and the campaign continues to the present. The Park Commission has stipulated that the local citizens and groups must raise sufficient funds to restore and bring the structure up to existing codes.

Measured drawings and plans proposing a potential use for Bolton Hall and its surrounding site were prepared by Henry F. Withey, FAIA, April 20, 1960.

The Historic Buildings Committee, AIA, submitted the building to the Cultural Heritage Board; the latter declared it historic, temporarily preserving it until the expiration period of March 22, 1964. The fate of the structure rests with the efforts of this final campaign to raise funds for restoration.

CAL-340
Page 3

REFERENCES

Interview with George Harris, Jr., 7320 Foothill Blvd., Tujunga, California. (Tel: GE 96967) November, 1960, December, 1960.
Writings published and unpublished by George Harris in possession of George Harris, Jr.
Monte Vista Sun, August 22, 1913
Bolton Hall by Esther McCoy, published in part or totally by the Los Angeles Times, Glendale and Tujunga papers; MS sent out by the Park Department; written December 1960.
HABS Inventory Form, CAL-340, Withey, Henry F., FAIA, Preservation Officer, filed September 25, 1959.
Los Angeles Times, Sunday, September 17, 1961, Part 4.
The Citizen-News, Hollywood, California, September 29, 1959.
The Independent, Glendale-Tujunga publication, September 13, 1962, Section 2, p. 2.
The Sunday Ledger, a Glendale publication, September 9, 1962.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Bolton Hall is constructed of stone boulders native to the Tujunga foothill area. The principal architectural features include the stone tower which extends above the main gable roof, the arched stone openings of various sizes and shapes, and the simple lines with the "common sense" use of natural materials.

EXTERIOR

Overall Dimensions: Approximately 33' wide by 77' long with an additional 14' x 12' jail at the east end, and an 11' x 50' concrete porch at the south side.

Wall Construction: Exterior walls are a veneer of stone boulders over an interior wood frame which has an interior wall finish of plaster. Twenty four inch wide stone pilasters project from the north and south exterior wall elevations at approximately 12' on center.

Roof: The gable roof is supported by scissor trusses at 6' on center fabricated of 4" x 8", net, wood members. One 4" x 8" rafter is spaced between trusses from ridge to plate.

CAL-340
Page 4

The existing Spanish tile roof, over a reported original shingle roof, overhangs at the north and south wall elevations approximately $1\frac{1}{2}'$. The 4" x 8" rafter ends at 18" on center are cut to the shape of an "OG" curve.

Tower Construction: The rectangular tower has a veneer of stone boulders over concrete walls and frame, and a hip roof covered with Spanish tile. The base of the tower serves as an exterior vestibule for the main entrance to the building. The tower walls have semi-circular openings at the east and west elevations and two rectangular openings at the north elevation above the main roof.

Porch: The concrete porch is surrounded by a low stone boulder wall extending to the rear third of the building at the south side. Originally, there was a trellis over the porch.

Doors and Windows: Stone arched doorways in the exterior walls have heavy plank redwood doors. Double doors occur at the main entrance.

Stone arched windows occur in all elevations with additional openings of various curved and rectangular shapes in the tower and gable ends.

Door and window wood frames are approximately 2" thick and shaped to fit the opening.

Chimney: A stone boulder chimney extends several feet above the roof ridge line.

INTERIOR

Floor Plan: The present floor plan consists of a lobby 9'-4" x 18'-4" with an adjoining room or office to the south, 9'-6" x 24'-4". East of the lobby, beyond a pair of doors, is the main assembly room 30' x 31' with a massive stone boulder fireplace 16' wide. A door in the south wall leads to the exterior porch. A door in the southwest corner of the assembly room leads to two small offices or rooms at the southwest front corner of the building. (It is the writers opinion that the interior partitions

CAL-340
Page 5

described above are not part of the original building and that these rooms were part of the main assembly area 30' x 56'.)

Doors at either side of the fireplace lead to two rooms east of the assembly room. A toilet room is in back of the fireplace and between these rooms. There is an exterior door in the north wall east of the assembly room. The two-cell prison extends beyond the main building to the east and is entered from either of the rooms east of the fireplace. The jail cells are portable and made of flat iron bsrs vertical and horizontal rivited to form a secure grid enclosure.

Floors: Main floor area is T&G hardwood boards.

Ceiling: The ceiling is exposed 8" wide T&G roof sheathing over the top chord of exposed roof trusses and rafters. Roof trusses are built up from eucalyptus logs.

All interior exposed roof ceiling sheathing and framing is stained. Framing members are stained a dark color and the sheathing is stained a light color exposing the wood grain.

Doorways and Doors: Rabbetted stops in 2" softwood frames, no trim. Doors are stock wood panel some with glass panels, now badly damaged or missing entirely.

Hardware: Stock butt hinges; 2 special metal bar fabricated cell units for old Tujunga City Hall Jail - doors missing.

Wrought iron strap hinges and wrought iron lever latch hardware with wrought iron strap hasp for locks on redwood plank entrance doors.

SITE

Bolton Hall is on the center of the property at the northeast corner of Commerce Avenue and Valmont Street in Tujunga. The property measures 168.42 feet on Commerce Avenue and 195 feet on Valmont Street. A low stone boulder wall retains earth at both street frontages. Concrete ramped walks and steps extend

CAL-340
Page 6

from the sidewalk to the main entrance at the west tower entrance and to the south entrance at the porch. A number of oak, pine and sycamore trees surround the building.

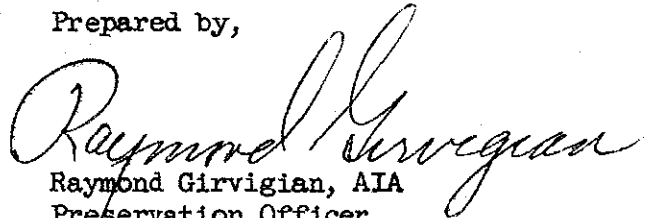
The site has a natural gradual slope from a high point at the northeast corner toward the low point at the corner of Commerce Avenue and Valmont Street.

Submitted by,



William F. Woollett, AIA
AIA Preservation Committee

Prepared by,



Raymond Girvigian, AIA
Preservation Officer
Southern California Chapter, AIA

September 1963

APPROVED:



Charles S. Pope, AIA
Supervising Architect, Historic Structures
Western Office, Design and Construction
National Park Service

DATE: Nov-20-1963.